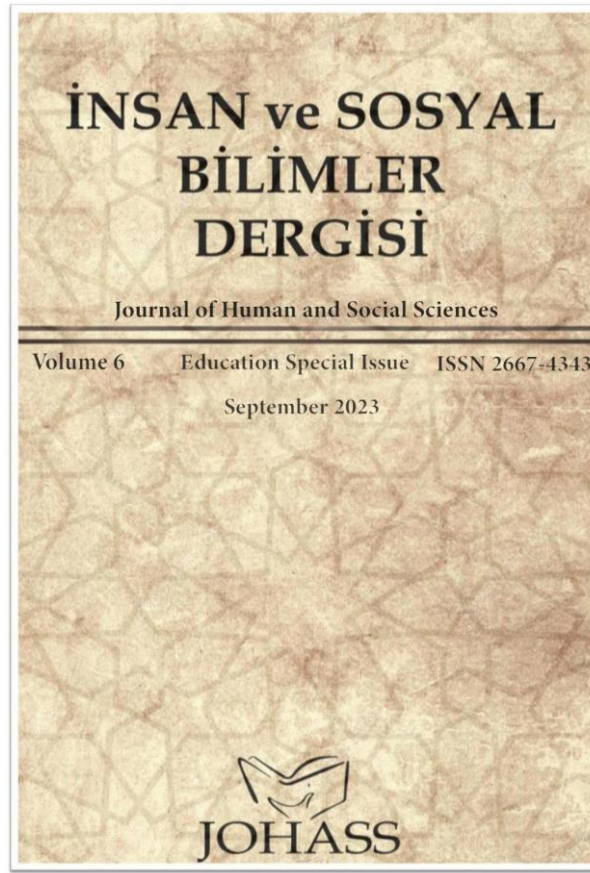


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A Review on the Working Conditions and Occupational Health and Safety Issues of International Students in Turkey

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A Review on the Working Conditions and Occupational Health and Safety Issues of International Students in Turkey

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Abstract

The increasing presence of international students in higher education in Turkey has brought their working conditions and issues related to occupational health and safety into sharper focus. Türkiye's educational and cultural richness attracts an international student body. Some of these students work during their education to meet their economic needs. For the methodology of the research, document analysis from qualitative research methods was employed. Primary data sources for the research include legislation related to Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) intersecting with international students in higher education in Turkey, academic articles, books, and reports. The obtained data were classified according to the aim of the research and discussed under respective headings. According to the results of the study; international students face challenges due to language barriers, cultural adaptation issues, and lack of knowledge about their legal rights. These challenges lead them to low-wage jobs and deprive them of occupational health and safety standards. It is recommended for Turkey to provide occupational health and safety training for international students and organize informative seminars about legal rights and work permits. Participation of employers in awareness programs targeting this group of students will be a significant step in solving these problems.

Keywords: International students, Turkey, working conditions, occupational health, job safety, literature review, cultural adaptation, legal rights

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Introduction

With the influence of the globalization process, significant changes are taking place in education worldwide, especially in higher education, as in many other sectors. One of these changes in higher education is the internationalization of universities. Universities are opening their doors to the world by hosting international students and faculty from different countries. The trend of globalization and change is pushing universities to exert more effort in internationalization, opening their doors to international students, and taking on global responsibilities and competition in this field.

In many countries around the world, universities now host students from different geographies. As the landscape of higher education shifts towards a more global setting, facilitating smooth entry for international students becomes crucial. The international higher education domain, which encompasses short-term and long-term student mobility and joint diploma programs with universities from diverse countries, is poised to burgeon. The surge in the number of international students — from about 800,000 in the 1970s to a projected 8 million by 2024, underscores this trend (UNESCO, 2022; Akpınar & Küçüköksel, 2022).

Turkey's participation in this global student movement began with the initiation of the Foreign Student Exam (FSE) in 1981. From a modest 5,378 international students in 1983, the numbers grew steadily, culminating in 55,000 by 2014, supported by various scholarships and programs (Yılmaz, 2018). Yet, with Turkey hosting only about 1% of the global international student population, there's room for growth. One primary barrier has been the FSE. Here's why it might need reconsideration (Çatal, 2021):

Advantages of Abolishing the FSE:

1. **Ease of Access:** Removal of the exam would streamline the admission process for international students, making Turkish universities more appealing.
2. **Competitive Edge:** As countries vie to attract international talent, removing entry barriers can provide Turkey with a competitive advantage.
3. **Diverse Student Body:** Easier entry might lead to a more diverse international student population, enriching the academic and cultural environment.
4. **Economic Benefits:** More international students might result in increased revenue for universities and local economies.

Potential Disadvantages:

1. **Quality Concerns:** Without a standardized exam, universities might find it challenging to assess the academic caliber of incoming students.
2. **Overcrowding:** An influx of students might strain university resources, including housing and academic facilities.
3. **Integration Issues:** A sudden surge in international students might lead to integration challenges, both academically and socially.

In conclusion, while Turkey has made strides in the international education sector, the abolition of the FSE could be a pivotal decision. To truly harness the benefits and navigate potential pitfalls, it's imperative to accompany such a move with supportive infrastructure, resources, and a long-term vision for internationalization. The higher education system in Turkey has shown promise in its rapid internationalization, and with the right moves, it can indeed position itself as a global education hub.

In recent years, Turkey has witnessed a growing trend in internationalization in higher education. One of the most important indicators of this trend is foreign students coming to Turkey for short and long-term undergraduate and graduate education (Yilmaz, 2018). Foreign students studying in Turkey are generally defined as "non-Turkish citizens who are in Turkey to receive education at any degree or branch level or to participate in Turkish courses" (European Union and Directorate General of Foreign Relations, 2023). As previously highlighted, Turkey has witnessed a significant surge in its higher education student population. Data from CoHE underscores this growth, indicating that international student figures stood at 108,076, 125,138, and 154,505 across the academic years from 2016 to 2019. This uptick in the migrant student demographic underscores an emerging need for comprehensive studies on the subject, given the paucity of research addressing the challenges faced by this group, especially outside the major cities in Turkey. Gaining insights into the obstacles these students confront is pivotal for university staff and administrators, equipping them to extend targeted assistance. By tailoring support to meet the unique needs of migrant students as they navigate the Turkish academic system, we can pave the way for them to seamlessly integrate into their courses and ultimately attain their educational aspirations (Yilmazel & Atay, 2023). However, it is important to note that this rapidly increasing number of international students brings various problems, especially for students unfamiliar with Turkey's geography, culture, language, and education system.

Generally, the most common problems encountered by international students in different countries and in Turkey are: adaptation problems and the accompanying stress (Güvendir, 2016); low academic achievement due to inadequate Turkish language skills and financial difficulties (Kılıçlar, Sarı, & Seçilmiş, 2012); psychological problems such as maladjustment, loneliness, shyness, and cultural shock (Kıroğlu, Kesten, & Elma, 2010); economic problems, health problems, housing difficulties, transportation difficulties, and homesickness (Kıroğlu et al., 2010).

The burgeoning influx of international students into Turkish higher education institutions has necessitated a sharper focus on their employment conditions and associated OHS concerns. This study endeavors to scrutinize the work environments and OHS challenges encountered by international students in Turkey and subsequently offers actionable solutions to mitigate these issues. While Turkey's rich educational and cultural tapestry lures students from across the globe, the economic imperatives compel a segment of this cohort to seek employment during their academic tenure. Consequently, their employment conditions and the encompassing OHS parameters assume significance, straddling the realms of both education and human rights. The essence of this research hinges on highlighting the occupational challenges besetting international students in Turkey. Moreover, there's a need to shed light on pertinent questions: Are these students working under formalized permissions, or are there instances of unauthorized employment? In unfortunate scenarios of workplace accidents, what are the repercussions for both the employer and the student? Addressing these questions, this study proposes a roadmap to ensure these students experience safer, more equitable, and health-conscious working environments.

Method

Model

This study was conducted within the framework of qualitative research methods, using the document review method. Document review is a qualitative research method carried out through the analysis of written materials (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2018). This method is particularly effective in obtaining new perspectives and interpretations through an in-depth analysis of existing literature, previous studies, reports, written documents, and other materials (Creswell, 2019).

Study Document

In this research, regulations, academic articles, books, and reports regarding OHS at the intersection of international students in higher education in Turkey have been used as the primary data sources. Within this research, an array of sources was consulted to examine OHS in relation to international students in Turkey's higher education context. Specifically, the studies by Çelik (2008), Musaoğlu (2016), and Sargeant & Tucker (2009a; 2009b) were highlighted due to their profound relevance and insights on the subject. It remains pertinent to delineate the explicit relationship of these studies to the overarching topic. Furthermore, it is essential to determine whether our assessment was exclusively grounded on these three works or if they were part of a more extensive literature review.

Data Collection

During the document review process, the relevant literature was systematically scanned, and significant documents related to the OHS at the intersection of international students in higher education in Turkey. In this process, the study in which Sargeant & Tucker (2009a; 2009b) defined the concept of immigrant workers and the study in which Musaoğlu (2016) examined the concept of internationalization in higher education were especially scrutinized among many other sources.

Compliance with Ethical Standard

The documentation review, planned to be work conditions and occupational health and safety issues of international students was ethically approved by the decision of İstinye University Social and Humanities Research Ethics Committee dated 20.07.2023 and numbered 2023/07. (İstinye University, 20 July 2023, No: 2023/07).

Findings

International Students in Higher Education and New Developments

Internationalization is generally defined as the "expansion of institutions' activities beyond national borders." This concept has become a significant factor in higher education today, and the impacts of globalization on higher education are diverse. Inter-institutional relations are increasing, and universities are taking significant steps towards internationalization (Zerengök, 2016). Maringe and Foskett emphasize that the concept of a

university embodies the idea of "universal" and note the rapid progress many institutions are making towards internationalization due to globalization. In Turkey, internationalization in higher education is emphasized as a concept that should be felt at every stage of instruction (Musaoğlu, 2016; Moshtari & Safarpour, 2023).

Internationalization covers a broad spectrum in universities, from curricula to diploma recognition (Knight, 2018). According to Erdoğan (2014), the idea of internationalization encompasses the universities' curricula, diploma validity, and the profiles of students and faculty.

Relevant literature argues that the missions of an international university should be based on six dimensions: "internationalized higher education, intercultural competence, integration with universality, interdisciplinary programs, civil participation, and comprehensive excellence." Internationalized higher education includes not just international students but also academic and administrative staff from various countries. Intercultural competence relates to language and interpersonal communication. Integration with universality promotes tolerance among students. Interdisciplinary programs ensure that students are more successful in the global market. It is also recommended that cultural and social activities be organized to help international students adapt to their environment. Lastly, comprehensive excellence involves practices across various fields to achieve the best outcomes (Musaoğlu, 2016). Qiang (2003) outlines two primary reasons affecting the internationalization of higher education. Firstly, international students contribute positively to the national economic interests by increasing institutional income. Secondly, he mentions the onset of an era where technological advancements have made education international, reducing the influence of national borders and policies (Musaoğlu, 2016, pp. 7-8).

Internationalization in education denotes adding an international and cultural dimension to a university's activities. This process aids students in transferring different cultures and experiences to a new environment. This interaction fosters tolerance within the university environment and can decrease prejudices between nations. Thus, international students are considered a crucial component for the internationalization of education (Zerengök, 2016). The concept of internationalization is multifaceted, aiming for professional development in various fields. Therefore, different authors approach the topic from different angles and contribute accordingly. Internationalization holds significant importance for national education, and a university progressing towards internationalization in its country

offers broader opportunities to its students. Efforts towards internationalization continue in Turkey (Çetinsaya, 2014).

With the process of globalization, the network of relationships between higher education institutions intensifies, and universities acquire a more international character. Students, academicians, and various social groups included, the internationalization of higher education emerges as one of the main drivers of today's social, cultural, and economic movements. In higher education, borders are disappearing, and there's an uptick in international academic collaborations. Turkey is making its mark in these developments. The international dimension of the higher education system stands out amidst these significant developments. The situation of the Turkish higher education system concerning international students, viewed as one of the factors of internationalization in higher education, is the primary subject of study (Aslan & Güneş, 2016).

The internationalization of Turkish higher education has materialized in various ways, most notably through the long and short-axis mobility of international students and faculty. Other developments include sending students abroad; aligning the Turkish higher education sector with the Bologna Process; opening universities abroad and establishing joint universities with other countries within Turkey; initiating different exchange programs, among others. The study primarily focuses on the influx of international students to Turkey (Aslan & Güneş, 2016; Ghanbary, 2017).

In many countries, international education is addressed as a critical issue because it serves several crucial purposes: acquiring qualified individuals from different countries, enhancing competition by meeting the human resource needs of the economy with their culture and values, producing and sharing useful information, and fostering intercultural and inter-country understanding and tolerance in the rising fields of security and diplomacy. International education provides opportunities for establishing international connections. Turkey's primary expectation in the pursuit of becoming a regional and global power is expressed as "creating a ready human resource abroad." Secondly, there's an opportunity to support Turkish academia with students from abroad. The expectation from higher education to strengthen these relations is quite high (Güneş, 2016, pp. 73).

In a short time, the number of international students in Turkey, which jumped from tens of thousands to over 40,000, is projected to rise to hundreds of thousands soon. The achievements recorded in this process are attributed to the promotions of Turkish universities and higher education abroad, some changes in higher education such as the increase in

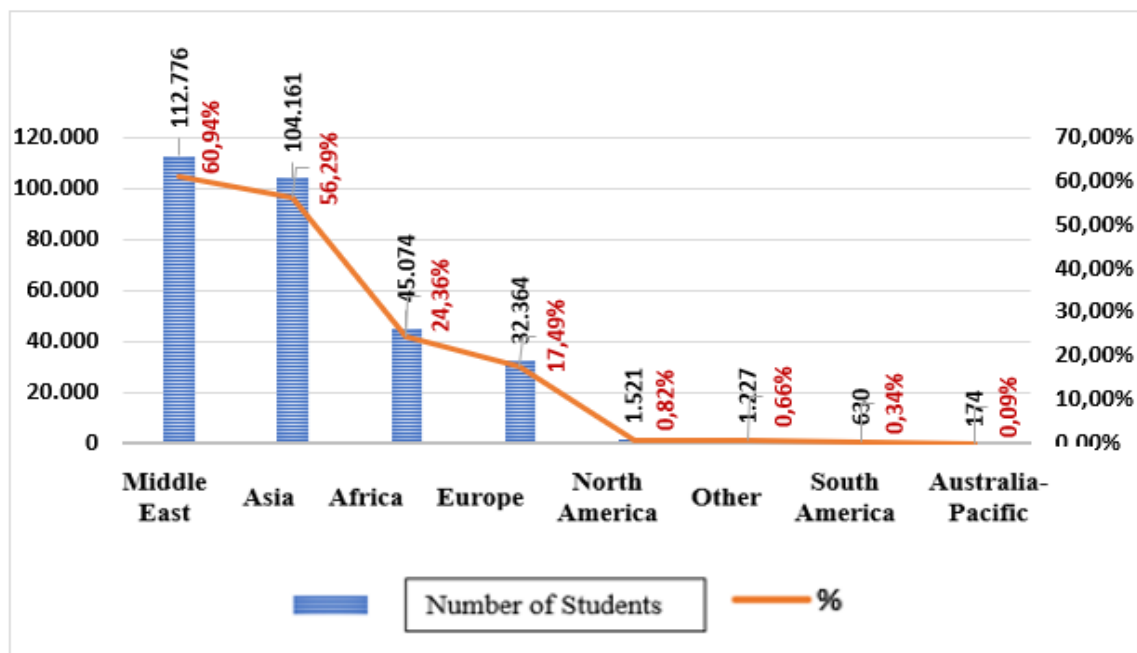
English-taught departments and institutions, boosting international faculty numbers, encouragement in establishing international student offices in universities, certain developments related to Turkey's foreign policy, and the increase in protocols signed with various governments (Güneş, 2016, pp. 74).

In Turkey, there are many universities both in the public and private sectors offering courses in various fields. The International Student Office, under the Council of Higher Education, performs extensive tasks to ensure the efficient management of international students and provide them with quality services. They have established a structure that supports international students in terms of their registration, accommodations, scholarship opportunities, social and cultural adaptation, and language education. The universities have created environments that are conducive for international students, leading to an increase in their numbers. The student quota for various courses is determined by the Board of Higher Education, which is also responsible for guiding international students in Turkey (Güneş, 2016, PP. 75).

In this research, there is a focus on evaluating the current situation of international students in Turkey and their experiences, given the historical context. These evaluations aim to offer suggestions and solutions to potential problems faced by the international students, improve the quality of the services they receive, and enhance the positive contributions they make to the Turkish higher education system and society. By comprehending the international student profile, it will be possible to develop strategies to address challenges and devise policies that promote the integration of these students (Güneş, 2016, pp. 76).

Figure 1

Number and Percentages of Students Studying in Turkish Universities in the 2022-2023 Academic Year by Continent (European Union and Directorate General of Foreign Relations, 2023)



According to Figure 1, which depicts the "Number and Percentages of Students Studying in Turkish Universities for the 2022-2023 Academic Year by Continent," the most substantial representations are from the Middle East at 60.94%, Asia at 56.29%, and Africa at 24.36%. In contrast, the Australia Pacific region has the lowest representation, accounting for just 0.09%. The data underscores a pronounced trend of students from the Middle East and Asia choosing to pursue their studies in Turkish universities. Together, these regions dominate the international student demographic in Turkey. The significant percentage from Africa also points to Turkey's growing appeal as a study destination for African students. Conversely, the negligible representation from the Australia Pacific region suggests either limited interest or fewer opportunities for students from this region to study in Turkey.

The number of students from the top ten countries studying in Turkish universities in the 2022-2023 academic year is provided in Table 1.

Table 1

Number of Students from the Top Ten Countries Studying in Turkish Universities in the 2022-2023 Academic Year by Country (European Union and Directorate General of Foreign Relations, 2023)

	Number of Students by Department												Total Number of Students		
	Associate's Degree			Bachelor's Degree			Master's Degree			Doctorate			Male	Female	Total
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total			
Total	15485	8751	24236	74097	39999	1000005	14204	6347	20551	4053	1953	6006	1000005	57050	164889
Syria	8773	4511	13284	22241	13295	35536	2682	1001	3683	479	148	627	34175	18955	53130
Azerbaijan	1111	435	1546	15265	5247	20512	2412	1351	3763	423	325	748	19211	7358	26569
Turkmenistan	2330	1872	4202	9848	7480	17328	531	276	807	44	33	77	12753	9661	22414
Iraq	443	333	776	3771	2172	5943	4221	1467	5688	1102	331	1433	9537	4303	13840
Iran	362	382	744	3480	3661	7141	948	1016	1964	1206	911	2117	5996	5970	11966
Afghanistan	410	184	594	5146	1402	6548	1721	300	2021	377	33	410	7654	1919	9573
Somalia	989	394	1383	4890	1967	6857	791	353	1144	106	11	117	6776	2725	9501
Germany	287	485	772	1822	2520	4342	131	284	415	40	69	109	2280	3358	5638
Yemen	552	78	630	4144	836	4980	431	114	545	172	41	213	5299	1069	6368
Egypt	228	77	305	3490	1419	4909	336	185	521	104	51	155	4158	1732	5890

Table 1 systematically presents the distribution of foreign students studying in Turkish universities during the 2022-2023 academic year by country, education level, and gender. The key findings are as follows:

- The total number of Syrian students (53,130) dominates this list, likely due to Turkey's geographical and historical connections with this country, and as a consequence of recent political and social issues in Syria. This may indicate the damage the civil war in Syria has inflicted upon its educational infrastructure and the tendency of the young population in the country to seek alternative locations to meet their educational needs.
- The high number of students from Turkic-speaking countries such as Azerbaijan (26,569) and Turkmenistan (22,414) could reflect cultural and historical ties between these countries and Turkey, as well as educational collaborations and agreements.

- Gender distribution is generally in favor of males; however, in some countries, like Iran, we observe an almost equal distribution at the doctoral level. This may reflect variances in gender norms, educational opportunities, and access in different countries. There's a peak in student numbers at the undergraduate level, indicating that the bachelor's degree may be a more popular choice for international mobility than master's or doctoral degrees.
- Graduate and doctoral programs have a notable student participation, especially from certain countries. This could suggest that Turkey might be perceived as an international hub for certain academic disciplines or research fields.

This data provides a foundation for analyzing the international position and strategic importance of Turkey in the higher education sector. More in-depth analyses can be made when the effects of inter-country educational policies, collaborations, and scholarship opportunities on these distributions are examined in detail.

The increase in the number of international students in Turkish universities has been supported by the establishment of foundation universities and by previous immigration policies aimed at international students. International students are at a higher occupational injury risk compared to their local peers (McCauley, 2005). This vulnerability arises from factors such as language and cultural barriers, limited employment opportunities, relatively challenging working conditions, and frequently encountered financial pressures (Scott et al., 2004; Thamrin et al., 2010; Ahonen et al., 2007).

A number of studies in developed countries address workplace vulnerability of students and international student workers (Hawthorne, 2005; Thamrin et al., 2010; Hansen and Donohoe, 2003). Looking at worker's compensation statistics, a profile can be formed on young workers' injury experiences (Smith and Mustard, 2009). However, there is no specific occupational code for international students, and underreporting to young workers, especially for women, poses a potential problem.

Reasons for international students to work most international students in Turkey are employed in workplaces. Results from the related literature suggest that the main reasons for international students to work are to earn money, cover living expenses, and elevate their standard of living (Kondakci et al., 2023; Yilmazel & Atay, 2023). However, some students have expressed a desire to gain work experience to improve their Turkish and understand Turkish culture. This finding is consistent with Manthei and Gilmore (2005), who argue that

having a job does not have detrimental effects, especially if students manage their working hours to fit their academic loads. Similar findings have been reported by McInnis et al. (2002), and Pascarella et al. (1998) have suggested that moderate work can actually enhance students' academic success and learning process, and improve their employability and organizational skills. Therefore, instead of deciding whether international students should work or not, it is essential to advise international students and University administrators on how many hours of paid employment students can manage successfully alongside their academic loads.

Occupational Health and Safety for Migrant Workers

The term 'migrant worker' is widely discussed in relevant literature, and one of the definitions, as provided by Sargeant and Tucker (2009a), describes them as "workers who have migrated to another country with the aim of finding employment and currently do not have permanent status in the host country."

The migrant category encompasses both legally admitted workers who have obtained the right to enter and work in a country and those who work without legal authorization. Additionally, it includes Temporary Foreign Workers (TFWs) whose employment rights are initially limited and foreign workers who have obtained longer-term residency rights but have not yet achieved permanent status (Sargeant and Tucker, 2009a, pp.51).

Sargeant and Tucker (2009a)'s definition of 'migrant worker' is useful in explaining the risks and vulnerabilities faced by migrant workers. This definition can be applied for analyzing the risks encountered by migrant workers, as it offers a comprehensive perspective. Both the definition and analysis extend beyond the micro or personal level, as they are explained at a macro or political-economic level. The layers of vulnerability include the following (Sargeant and Tucker, 2009b, pp. 605):

Layer 1 - Factors in the Receiving Country: This encompasses the socio-economic conditions of the receiving country, the sectors in which migrant workers are employed, access to and power of collective representation, access to and power over regulatory protection, social inclusion/exclusion, living in the employer's place of residence, urban/rural location, and the role of unions/civil society groups, such as churches and community organizations.

Layer 2 - Migration Factors: This includes issues related to migration security, legal status in the host country, visa or visa-free status, whether status is tied to an employment

contract, and the duration and conditions of the right to stay. The role of recruitment agencies and employers in the recruitment process and the treatment of migrants during migration are also considered.

Layer 3 - Migrant Worker Factors: Factors such as reasons for migration (e.g., socio-economic conditions in their home countries and the need to remit money), the migrant's level of education, language and skill levels, and access to suitable jobs and the possibility of applying for jobs are crucial.

In terms of the scope of the issue, studies have shown that migrant worker employment is widespread, especially in sectors where unregulated, precarious work and the use of undocumented labor are the norm (Bilir, 2001; McLaren et al., 2004a; McDowell & Bhachu, 2008; European Commission, 2007; International Labour Organization [ILO], 2004; World Health Organization [WHO], 2007; Akyıldız, Çelik, & Bulut, 2020).

Migrant workers often face greater job insecurity compared to standard employees because they are required to work longer and less socially desirable hours. This leaves them more vulnerable to occupational hazards (Loh & Richardson, 2004; Quinlan et al., 2010). These vulnerable workers are more likely to experience job insecurity and have fewer rights compared to more secure workers (Quinlan & Mayhew, 2001; Tucker, 2002; McLaren et al., 2004b; Nossar et al., 2004; Siddiqui, 2006; Schenker, 2008; Coldring et al., 2009; Sargeant and Tucker, 2009). Research shows that migrant workers are often exposed to hazardous conditions, leading to higher rates of workplace accidents and illnesses compared to standard employees, and they tend to have a higher likelihood of accidents and illnesses compared to standard employees (McKay et al., 2006). For example, in the United States (US), between 1996 and 2000, while the employment rate for migrant workers increased by 22%, the rate of fatal occupational injuries for this population increased by 43%, while the total number of fatal occupational injuries in the US decreased by 5% during the same period (Loh & Richardson, 2004, pp. 42).

After losing much of the economic and social security they had in their home countries, migrant workers often find themselves economically and socially marginalized in their new countries. This means that many migrants are largely "invisible" at many societal levels and are overlooked in government health statistics (Schenker, 2008). Reports by Abrahams et al. (2001) indicate that temporary migrant workers are often confronted with widespread exclusion from the so-called "primary" labor market and instead concentrate in the "secondary" labor market, which mostly consists of low-paid minorities. This results in

these groups being disadvantaged in various dimensions, including income, wealth, social mobility, housing, education, and social participation (Cheung, 2006; Siddiqui, 2006; Çetindağ, 2010).

Legislation Related to Occupational Health and Safety

The legislation related to occupational health and safety includes the following:

1. Convention No. 155 on Occupational Safety and Health and the Working Environment

This international treaty, adopted on June 3, 1981, during the General Conference of the International Labour Organization (ILO) in Geneva, aims to establish a national policy on occupational safety and health. It became effective in Turkey on April 22, 2005. Convention No. 155 is a comprehensive agreement covering all workers and addressing various aspects of working life, including working conditions, occupational accidents, and occupational diseases.

2. Convention No. 161 on Occupational Health Services

Also known as the Occupational Health Services Convention, this agreement was adopted by the ILO on June 7, 1985, and it entered into force in Turkey on April 22, 2005. The goal of this convention, established during the General Conference of the ILO in Geneva in 1985, is to protect workers from illnesses and injuries. It recommends measures for providing suitable physical and mental health conditions, creating a safe and healthy working environment, and adapting work to the physical and mental health of workers.

3. Framework Convention on Improving Occupational Safety and Health (No. 187)

Adopted during the General Conference of the International Labour Organization (ILO) in Geneva on May 31, 2006, this framework convention entered into force in Turkey on January 16, 2014. Convention No. 187 emphasizes the globalization of occupational accidents, occupational diseases, and related fatalities and calls for measures to reduce them. It aims to ensure the protection of the life and health of workers in all professions.

Occupational Health and Safety Law No. 6331

Adopted in 2012, Law No. 6331 aims to regulate all responsibilities, rights, and obligations related to occupational health and safety, from employers to employees, with the goal of ensuring occupational health and safety and improving existing conditions. It introduced significant changes, such as the obligation to conduct risk analysis and assessment, the requirement for all workplaces to employ occupational physicians and workplace safety specialists, and higher administrative fines for violations.

Occupational Health and Safety for Migrant Workers

According to the International Organization for Migration (IOM), there are approximately 272 million international migrants, with 52% being male and 48% female. About 74% of all international migrants fall within the working age group of 20-64. Out of the total international migrants, approximately two-thirds (164 million) consist of migrant workers (IOM, 2019). The International Labour Organization (ILO) reports that migrant workers are geographically concentrated, with 60.8% of all migrant workers in just three regions: North America (23.0%), North, South, and Western Europe (23.9%), and the Arab States (13.9%). Other regions hosting migrant workers (above 5%) include Eastern Europe, Sub-Saharan Africa, Southeast Asia and the Pacific, and Central and Western Asia. North Africa has the lowest number of migrant workers (less than 1%) (IOM, 2018).

Migrant workers often face some of the worst working conditions. There are persistent problematic areas in standardized working conditions, both locally and globally. However, compared to past rates, there is an increasing flow of migrants, leading to an increase in the number of individuals experiencing violations of their rights and negative working conditions.

Rights of International Students to Work in Turkiye

International students have the right to work in the countries where they receive their education. This right is typically around 20-24 hours per week, with some variations. By law, they have access to OHS services and training. In Turkey, international students enrolled in master's or doctoral programs can work as researchers in scientific projects related to their studies to finance their postgraduate studies. Some private universities accept fully funded postgraduate students and, in return, may require these students to assist in academic tasks. Undergraduate students usually have the opportunity to work part-time depending on their academic schedule. In developed countries with popular universities, the procedures and

conditions for international students to work are favorable. Therefore, rather than determining whether international students will work, it is advisable to emphasize the importance of studying how many hours of paid employment international students can successfully undertake alongside their academic workload.

Study Rights of International Students in Other Countries

International students have the right to work in the countries where they are pursuing their education. This right is typically defined with some variations, allowing approximately 20-24 hours per week. By law, they also have access to occupational health and safety services and training. In Turkey, international students enrolled in master's or doctoral programs can work as researchers on scientific projects to finance their postgraduate studies. Some private universities admit fully funded graduate students and may require them to work as teaching assistants in exchange for their scholarships. Undergraduate students often have the opportunity to work part-time in jobs related to their academic programs.

In developed countries with popular universities, the procedures and conditions for international students to work are generally in favor of the students. Examples include:

- US: Students with F1 student visas (a type of visa issued in the United States for international students to participate in academic programs and English language training programs) can work on-campus during their first year and off-campus during their second year. There are no restrictions on the number of hours they can work.
- United Kingdom (UK): European Union [EU]/ European Economic Area [EEA] students can work without restrictions in the UK. Non-European Union country (Non-EU) students can work with a Tier 4 student visa, up to 20 hours per week during term and full-time during university holidays.
- China: Students with a Chinese student visa can work with permission from immigration authorities.
- Canada: Students can work off-campus for up to 20 hours per week.
- Australia: Student visa holders can work without restrictions during university holidays and up to 40 hours every two weeks during term.
- France: International students with a French student visa have the right to work approximately 964 hours per year, equivalent to around 18.5 hours per week.

- Russia: Student visa holders can work up to 20 hours per week, provided their employment contract ends at the same time as their educational program.
- Germany: Non-EU students with a valid German student visa can work up to 120 full days or 240 half days per year. EU students are typically allowed to work up to 20 hours per week.
- New Zealand: Student visa holders can work up to 20 hours per week, with no restrictions during holidays.
- Japan: Student visa holders need to apply for a separate work permit, and the types of jobs available are limited.
- Spain: Non-EU student visa holders can work up to 20 hours per week, while EU, EEA, and Swiss students face no employment restrictions.

In some countries such as Costa Rica, Cyprus, Fiji, Lebanon, and India, international students are not granted work permits, and the conditions are made very difficult, which goes against the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Studee, 2023).

Are International Students Young Workers?

The United Nations (UN) defines individuals aged 15-24 who are engaged in work as young workers. International students fall within this definition. These students work during their free time, and their vocational internship programs also fall within this category. Ensuring the safety of young workers today is considered an investment in the safety of future generations, so including international students in this category is a valid assessment. The health and safety practices for young workers should be at the center of efforts to secure their safety and health in the workplace (ILO, 2018).

When making a general assessment, the following observations can be made regarding international student workers:

- They tend to be concentrated in sectors such as hotels, restaurants, wholesale and retail trade.
- Their likelihood of employment under non-standard contract arrangements such as part-time or temporary contracts is higher.
- Their lack of experience and maturity in their jobs can expose them to risks related to overestimating their physical capabilities or underestimating safety and health risks associated with their work.

- Another concern is that working in adverse conditions for an extended period may contribute to immunity issues, which can later lead to other illnesses. However, this factor is not often addressed in occupational health and safety monitoring (Belin et al., 2011).

Risk Factors for International Students

They face both internal risk factors reflecting their lack of experience and external risk factors related to the sectors they often work in. Risk factors for young workers can be listed as follows:

- Being less aware of risks
- Having less experience and qualifications
- Lack of experience in prevention due to the development of occupational diseases over time
- Working in high-risk industries (usually more common among males)
- Psychosocial risks, including those related to gender
- Employment contracts (temporary, part-time, contract work, etc.)

Efforts to improve OSH factors for international student workers vary by country and sector. However, some common elements include:

- Employers have the responsibility to provide a safe and healthy workplace and provide health and safety training before employment (European Agency for Safety and Health at Work [EASHW], 2020).
- They have the right to receive safety and health training in a language they understand, ask questions when they don't understand instructions, report unsafe conditions to their supervisor, and seek solutions.
- They should be given suitable tasks and provided with adequate supervision and guidance.
- They should be involved in safety matters and encouraged to develop a strong safety culture (International Labour Organization [ILO], 2018).

In Turkey, practices related to international students entering the labor market are regulated as follows:

International students who come to Turkey for education purposes need to obtain a work permit to work in any job while continuing their education. Regulations regarding the residence permits, residence permit requirements, and working rights of international students

have been made in Law No. 6458 on Foreigners and International Protection, which was passed in the Turkish Grand National Assembly on April 4, 2013.

Discussion and Results

Migrant workers who have lost a significant portion of their economic and social safety nets in their home countries are often trapped between economic and social gaps in their new countries, leading to their marginalization. This situation implies that many migrants are largely 'invisible' across various levels of society, often going unnoticed in government health statistics (Schenker, 2008). Reports by Abrahams et al. (2001) state that temporary migrant workers are frequently excluded from the "primary" labor market and are instead directed toward the "secondary" labor market, which often consists of low-wage minorities. This leads to disadvantages for this group in terms of income, wealth, social mobility, housing, education, participation in social life, and various other dimensions (Cheung, 2006; Siddiqui, 2006). Castells (2000: 376) accurately notes that the boundary between social exclusion and survival in everyday life is becoming increasingly blurred, a phenomenon applicable to an increasing number of people, including migrants. Temporary workers in employment share many labor characteristics with migrant workers, resulting in both short-term and long-term health and safety consequences (Ahonen, Benavides, & Benach, 2007).

Another topic in this research is cultural diversity, which is complex and loaded with value. The examination of cultural diversity is often sidelined in OHS discussions concerning migrant workers, with the focus often redirected toward other OHS explanations such as individual behavior or communication deficiencies. However, research examining the impact of different cultural characteristics on OHS outcomes, such as communication styles, is complex. On one hand, there is evidence that differences in attitudes, perceptions, and beliefs related to safety may emerge among individuals at the intersection of migrant and non-migrant backgrounds (Fiske, 2002). On the other hand, an examination of the published literature on this subject by Mearns & Yule (2009) concluded that there were no consistent predictors for risk-taking behavior and safety performance in a cross-cultural context. Considering the study by Spangenberg et al. (2003) which Mearns & Yule (2009) took into account, they noted that the opportunity presented unique data where workers of the same (albeit different) national backgrounds performed the same tasks in the same project over the

same period of time. They also pointed out that fundamental national values were not measured in this study, but data from cultural dimension research by Hofstede et al. (2010) indicated that Norway and Sweden shared similar dimensions in terms of power distance, masculinity, and individualism, yet safety performance between the two national groups differed significantly. Spangenberg et al. (2003) attributed this to differences in planning and education levels between the two countries and variations in compensation systems, revealing the interaction between national and institutional environmental/cultural factors (Mearns & Yule, 2009; Liu-Farrer, 2009). Therefore, comparing OHS differences between different cultures is a complex task.

Despite the increasing interest in this research topic, the extent of work-related injuries and illnesses among the migrant worker population remains largely missing in the discourse on globalization, which often focuses on specific political and economic paradigms related to trade and capital flows. Additionally, those working on international health issues frequently fail to look beyond a medical paradigm and consider the larger social, cultural, political, and economic contexts in which health issues are embedded (Coordination of Action Research on AIDS and Mobility [CARAM] Asia, 2007; Siddiqui, 2006). Furthermore, there are specific shortcomings in existing research. Firstly, most studies on this topic are often confined to a limited number of industries, such as textile and clothing production, retail, and call centers, which often have a tradition of exploitation and frequently employ women and/or new migrants on an irregular basis. Secondly, measuring the extent of occupational diseases and injuries among migrant workers is challenging because government databases rarely record the occupational injuries, deaths, and compensation claims of these workers. More research is needed to identify causal factors and establish more robust criteria (Akyıldız, Çelik, & Bulut, 2020). Lastly, there has been very little research on the well-being of migrant workers, especially with regard to the psychological stress of being a foreign worker, which is often both isolated and underexplored. In summary, given the fragmentation of the literature into multiple discourses, an interdisciplinary approach is required to understand the complexity of the subject. Additionally, this project not only seeks to measure the extent of work-related injuries and illnesses among migrant workers but also requires the development of methodological tools to give voice to this vulnerable population and improve health outcomes.

In the context of Turkey's recent internationalization strategy, there has been a significant increase in the acceptance rates of international students. These students are

employed in various sectors during their education and face certain challenges related to occupational health and safety. This review examines the working conditions of international students, the occupational health and safety issues they encounter, and academic perspectives on overcoming these issues:

Overlapping Safety Gaps

International students studying in Turkey, when integrated into the labor market, are exposed to various risks due to their status as migrant workers and their young age. The combination of these two factors makes them more vulnerable to workplace accidents and injuries. In the literature, it is noted that the risks faced by young migrant workers are higher in the workplace compared to other employee groups.

Work Experiences of International Students and Exposure to Injuries

The reasons for international students entering the labor market are solely economic. Improving language skills, social integration, and cultural exchange are also among these reasons. However, many of these students work in low-paid and temporary jobs, making them susceptible to economic exploitation. Their exposure to injuries aligns with the typical profile of young workers, with cuts, burns, and sprains being the most common types of injuries.

Occupational Health and Safety Training Practices and the Role of Universities

Universities have a responsibility to not only enrich the educational lives of international students but also ensure their presence in a safe working environment. However, current educational practices often fall short in providing sufficient knowledge and awareness regarding occupational health and safety.

Recommendations

Here are recommendations for addressing the occupational health and safety issues of international students:

Integration of OHS Education in University Curriculum

Universities should integrate occupational health and safety (OHS) education into their curricula, ensuring that international students receive comprehensive training on workplace

safety and health. This education should cover the rights and responsibilities of workers, hazard identification, prevention measures, and emergency procedures.

Comprehensive OHS Training by Employers

Employers hiring international students should provide comprehensive OHS training as part of the onboarding process. This training should be tailored to the specific hazards and risks present in their workplace. It should include information on safe work practices, proper use of personal protective equipment (PPE), and reporting procedures for accidents or unsafe conditions.

University-Industry Collaboration

Universities and the business community should collaborate to address OHS issues affecting international students. Joint initiatives and projects can be developed to enhance the safety and well-being of these students in the workplace. This collaboration may involve internship programs, co-op opportunities, or research projects that focus on OHS improvement.

Government Policy Review and Protection

Governments should review and update policies related to working conditions for international students. It is essential to ensure that these policies provide adequate protection for international students in the labor market. This may involve revising regulations, conducting inspections, and enforcing compliance with OHS standards.

By implementing these recommendations, universities, employers, and governments can contribute to creating safer and healthier working conditions for international students, ultimately enhancing their overall educational and work experiences.

Compliance with Ethical Standard

The documentation review, planned to be work conditions and occupational health and safety issues of international students was ethically approved by the decision of İstinye University Social and Humanities Research Ethics Committee dated 20.07.2023 and numbered 2023/07. (İstinye University, 20 July 2023, No: 2023/07). İstinye University, 20 July 2023, No: 2023/07.

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